

# Financial support for the collections in 2006 and 2007

Warren Bebbington

Since adopting its *Cultural policy statement* last year, the University has been taking steps to address a range of conservation and cataloguing issues across its cultural collections. In 2006 the University, through a competitive grants scheme, funded a number of projects to benefit the cultural collections. The successful projects included display upgrades for the Classics and Archaeology Collection in the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the Surveying and Geomatic Engineering Collection, the Medical History Museum, the Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum and the Physics Museum. Preservation work included rehousing herbarium type specimens, historic concert programs, orchestral scores, architectural theses, and rare maps. Drawings created by students in the University's architectural atelier from the 1920s to 1940s were humidified, flattened and rehoused. Many prints in the Baillieu Library were photographed and the images made available online, as was the catalogue of the Surveying and Geomatic Engineering Collection.

In 2007, the University's cultural collections have benefitted further, as a result of generous financial support from the 2006 University Appeal, the University's Cultural and Community Relations Advisory Group, and the Miegunyah Trust.

In choosing how to allocate their donations to the 2006 University Appeal, many alumni, staff, and other supporters selected 'Library and cultural collections'. Their contributions were combined with a grant from the University's Cultural and Community Relations Advisory Group to support a wide range of projects in the areas of display enhancement, online access and preservation. Examples include the purchase of some new display cases for the Physics Museum; a new database and online collection interface for the Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum; preservation measures for the Faculty of Music's two Indonesian gamelan orchestras and the historic technical drawings in the A.G.M. Michell Engineering Collection; digital photography of artefacts in the Medical History Museum; and other worthwhile projects which will be discussed in greater detail in the next issue of *University of Melbourne Collections*.

On an even larger scale, the University's Cultural Collections Committee has initiated a Collections Renewal Project which will require substantial funding over a number of years, to address significant backlogs in cataloguing and conservation. The first stage was supported in 2007 by a

very generous grant from the Miegunyah Trust. It is most fitting that a fund established under the bequest of a benefactor who was also a discerning collector, and ultimately a generous donor, of rare books, prints, paintings, archival material and decorative arts, Sir Russell Grimwade (and his wife Lady Grimwade), should be of such benefit to the care of the University's collections. Projects funded in this first stage include cataloguing of historic herbarium specimens, rare maps, East Asian books and manuscripts, and early earth sciences texts; digitisation of the cassette recordings of the lectures of Frank Knopfelmacher; and the conservation of physics artefacts, historic dental drawings, prints, and Australiana including books from the Sir Russell and Lady (Mab) Grimwade collection and the Sophie Ducker collection. In Spring of 2008 a special university-wide Cultural Treasures event will be held to celebrate the collections and highlight the benefits received from the support of the Miegunyah Trust.

Other collections projects funded by the Miegunyah Trust in 2007 included the commissioning of a new integrated archival management and access system for the University of Melbourne Archives, continuing support for the conservation-standard



Russell Grimwade (1879–1955) at his office in Flinders Lane, 8 October 1931, photographic print, 10.0 x 7.0 cm (detail). UMA/I/3302, University of Melbourne Archives.

Grimwade's art collection is now in the Ian Potter Museum of Art, his rare books in Baillieu Library Special Collections, and his papers at the University of Melbourne Archives. Always a generous philanthropist, during his lifetime Grimwade gave £50,000 towards the building of the Russell Grimwade School of Biochemistry. Sir Russell and Lady (Mab) Grimwade's bequests continue to support the School of Biochemistry, and enabled the establishment of the Miegunyah Trust and the Miegunyah imprint at Melbourne University Publishing.

remounting of the Baillieu Library Print Collection, and the second phase of a three-year project to digitise the Russell and Mab Grimwade Collection at the Ian Potter Museum of Art.

A substantial grant from the Leslie Moira Henderson Bequest will enable the digital photography of many artworks from the Baillieu Library Print Collection and the University of Melbourne Art Collection (Ian Potter Museum of Art).

The Baillieu family has donated funds to arrange and describe the collections of University leaders (chancellors, deputy chancellors, vice-chancellors and deputy vice-chancellors) held in the University of Melbourne Archives. The Sidney Myer Fund donated \$20,000 to Dr Derham Groves, Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, for the conservation of architectural drawings by A.W. Purnell (held in the University of Melbourne Archives) and the creation of a website about Purnell, his life and work. Rio Tinto continues to support the University of Melbourne Archives through the position of the Rio Tinto Business Archivist. The Williamson Foundation has provided a generous grant towards programs supporting

the re-opening of the Grainger Museum.

An anonymous donor is funding the creation of a video that will interpret the Savory and Moore pharmacy display in the Medical History Museum, demonstrating in particular the techniques used for compounding medicines before the advent of pharmaceutical mass production. This same donor made possible the acquisition from London and installation of the historic pharmacy in the early 1970s. Two dental alumni, Dr Jeremy Graham and Dr John Brownbill, made donations to the Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum.

An anonymous donor has pledged \$1 million over the next three years to building up the collection of the Classics and Archaeology Library. The donor is a graduate of the University who holds a high regard for Melbourne's standards and staff dedication and has a great passion for Classics. Exhibitions from the Classics and Archaeology Collection, displayed at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, have benefitted from the generosity of Dr Geoffrey Mottershead and Ms Hillary Mottershead, and of Mr Michael Bartlett. The Chancellor, Mr Ian Renard, has also supported the activities of the R.E. Ross Trust

Curator of the Classics and Archaeology Collection.

All in all, the interest shown in our cultural collections by an array of foundations and individuals has been very pleasing for everyone involved. It has helped to make the collections much more widely accessible and usable, for our students, our staff, and the public. My sincere thanks to our supporters on behalf of us all.

**Professor Warren Bebbington** is Pro Vice-Chancellor, University Relations, and Chair of the Cultural Collections Committee. He has been Ormond Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Music since 1991.

Readers wishing to support the University's cultural collections can visit <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/alumni/giving> or contact:  
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